

SafeGrowth One-Year Report

Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses

A year ago, the West End Safegrowth Team chose to focus on an area known as the Tot Lot. Over a decade ago, the area was home to a toddler playground. Despite the original purpose of this lot, drug dealers would stash and sell drugs from this location. This location in the neighborhood has been a source of frustration for decades. The Tot Lot offered a semi-well-maintained area by CRC for social gatherings however illicit activity (drugs, prostitution, shootings) dominated the area. Not all gatherings in the area have been illicit in nature, but the illicit activities deterred positive gathers and the feeling of safety within the area. It has been a challenge for some time to get the correct amount of attention/resources to achieve a more dominant positive atmosphere in the location. This project is one of a series of current attempts working to achieve this goal. Positive changes are coming soon around the area (housing rehabs, area Wi-Fi, and West End Bar and Grill). The transformation of this area is key to spark long-term transformation in this area.

As our vision states, the Tot Lot (under its new name) is a safe and welcoming gathering space for families and individuals that live, love, and lounge in the West End. Through the park's redesign and new mixed-use development, additional housing, service, and engagement needs are being met!

Where we are today:

Access control is a major element in Safegrowth. Over this last year, our team has been working to improve the safety of the area. Our organization has made and continues to make attempts to purchase this location. We have not had success in doing so up to this point. Without ownership, we are not able to fully control and transform the area. However, we have been able to make some improvements, through City grants and partnerships, to bring about physical improvements to the area. We leveraged City funds to change out the old yellowish lighting for led lighting. The street light direction was also reoriented to face into the park and improve visibility in the area. We purchased flowerpots and benches to further improve the area's appeal. In partnership with CMHA, we will install totem poles that will display history placards and West End banners.

We were successful at partnering with the City of Cincinnati to get the RAISED grant. This grant will bring about significant improvements to Linn Street. The raised grant will improve the safety of pedestrians along Linn Street through street calming elements (lane reduction, speed humps, crosswalk signage and bump-outs). In addition to safety, beautification improvements will add to the transformation of Linn Street. New trees, a street island, and additional landscaping will increase the appeal of the area. These changes will occur in 2025-26, after more community engagement and feedback is received and plans are finalized.

Through the LISC's implementation and the Safe and Clean grants, we were able to purchase a golf cart, yard games, a projector screen, and plants to improve the space's appeal and positive activities in the area. Each month, we host Live on Linn events in the Tot Lot, to draw in neighbors and increase productive usage of the space. These events have spanned from summer read-outs to community resource fairs. We

average anywhere from 50 to 100 participants at these events. Since our activation, residents have begun to host activities in the space as well.

Our partnerships have expanded to include CPS's PIVOT team, Urban League's Violence Reduction team, and Vice Mayor Kearney's reassembled Livingston Safety group. We hold joint events and activities with Urban League and PIVOT officers.

We still have a long way to go to improve the overall safety of our community, but we believe that through the continuous application of Safegrowth principles and our broad coalition of residents, stakeholders and institutions, we believe transformation is on the horizon.